

C-J Opinions

Church clearly states bishops' pastoral role

To the Editor:

Regarding Mr. Starkweather's letter (Opinion, March 6: "Poor reception?"), a few comments are in order.

Lumen Gentium #25 (the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) states: "In matters of faith and morals the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul."

Christus Dominus #12 (The Vatican II Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church) states: "Finally, (the bishops) should set forth the ways by which are to be solved the very grave questions concerning the ownership, increase, and just distribution of material goods, peace and war, and brotherly relations among all peoples."

In matters of non-infallible teaching, we certainly have the right to an informed, reasonable dissent from the bishops. I take

exception, however, to the lack of respect accorded to the pastoral leaders of the Church. Whether or not one agrees with a particular episcopal teaching, we are obliged to consider it well — with prayer as well as study. Regarding the moral issues of peace and the economy, we can be certain not to find competence in the secular world.

For those who would question whether or not the bishops should speak out on such issues, *Christus Dominus* could not state the Church's view more clearly.

Lastly, we would do well to consider the well-known words of St. Paul: "For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Todd Flowerday
Chapin Street
Rochester

Father Curran should take his 'spanking like a man'

To the Editor:

Regarding your article on Father Charles Curran on March 13, I, among many others, it seems, have an opinion. For the sake of brevity, and since he is referred to as "congenial... smiling Charlie," I'll call him that. I believe Charlie can be likened to a small boy on the verge of receiving a well-deserved spanking. However, before this happens, he is offered and rejects amnesty.

Now come all the disciples of permissiveness with their plaintive cries of "pluralism!"

'Sticking with Congregation' on theological dissent issue

To the Editor:

In reply to the bishop's statement in the *Courier-Journal* of March 13, I believe that Bishop Clark is missing the point. The Congregation is not questioning Father Curran's personal life or his professional reputation. The Congregation is merely saying Father Curran is not in tune with official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and that he should stop proposing that his "theology" is representative of Roman Catholic doctrine.

Since his theology is representative of the beliefs of some American Catholic bishops, it is they who should take credit for Father Curran's theology. As for me, I'm sticking with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The bishop of Rochester seems to be in accord with Father Curran.

The bishop asked that we pray that God will guide and bring peace to those who are working to resolve this matter in the best interest of the Church. To this I say, "Amen" — otherwise the faithful may have to choose whether to follow the bishop of Rome or the bishop of Rochester.

John J. Clark III
Wayland

EDITOR'S NOTE: As we read it, Bishop Clark discussed only the need for theological dialogue. We don't recall his saying anything about agreeing with Father Curran's ideas.

'March for Death' really promotes cause of unborn

To the Editor:

N.O.W.'s Eleanor Smeal just held her March for Death in Washington, D.C., drawing 85,000, according to the media. Frankly, with the killing of more than 15 million little, defenseless, unborn babies since the legalization of abortion in 1973, it is not surprising that so many showed up to celebrate the killing and the spilled blood. No longer, you realize, do the pro-abortionists deny the humanity of our little unborn brothers and sisters; they just proclaim the right to snuff out their lives.

I have to thank the pro-abortionists for helping to keep this issue alive and in front of the people. In this past week, Geneva Area Right to Life has had more inquiries from

people wanting to help the pro-life cause than ever before.

Along with our established groups in Wayne, Seneca and Ontario counties, we have heard from people wanting to form local groups to fight abortion in Romulus, Hall and Geneva just this week.

Contact GARTI at 17 Huff St., Waterloo, (315)539-8860 for information on how to help, join these groups or just for ideas.

It is ironic, but that celebration of death in Washington will in the long run help to save lives, as it gets more people involved in working for the sanctity of all human life.

Don Peters
Huff St.
Waterloo

Guidelines

The *Courier-Journal* welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They should be sent to: Opinion, *Courier-Journal*, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made, and the letters will reflect the writers' own styles.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space reserved for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent to other publications or persons. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.

Publicly thanks family of Mary Lou O'Brien

To the Editor:

I was so very pleased to see the lovely story and photos of the Eucharistic ministry of Mary Lou O'Brien, her sons Michael and John, and the other dedicated people at the Geneseo Skilled Nursing Facility.

I have known Mary Lou and her wonderful family since childhood. Her dear mother, Marguerite Pisano, was my first catechism teacher, and it was she who prepared me, my three sisters and many other children in our small community for our first Holy Eucharist. I loved her then, I love her now!

Mary Lou is from a long line of loving, beautiful people who shared their faith in and love for Jesus by bringing Him to others. Mary Lou's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Spezzano, was always there when someone was ill or needed her. One of my earliest memories was of her family's love and care to my dearest father, John Allen, when he was gravely ill with pneumonia.

Two of Mary Lou's aunts were nurses who continually gave of themselves. They were always there to nurse and even to say the rosary when one of our family or friends' families lay dying. So you see, it comes naturally for Mrs. O'Brien, as it will for her children to live the message of Christ on earth.

I am not certain, but I like to think that it was my own dearest mother's presence at the Geneseo facility that made Mary Lou intensely aware of the need to bring the Holy

Eucharist to the patients on a weekly basis.

My mother, Helen Allen, had attended Mass daily and received Communion daily for many years before entering the nursing facility. At that time, there was a lovely rosary service each Sunday, conducted by wonderfully dedicated people like Mary Lou who gave so much of themselves in Jesus' and His Blessed Mother's names. The one Mass when the patients were able to receive Communion was held only on one Tuesday per month. The patients so looked forward to these wonderful spiritual events! Ah, how my mother and so many others like her missed the Holy Eucharist, and what a blessing to them when Mary Lou and her group began their ministry.

Also, I'd like to mention that while my mother lay dying, I needed to leave her one day to conduct some needed financial business for her. Who did I call? Mary Lou O'Brien and her sweet mother, Mrs. Pisano, of course! They continually prayed the rosary in my absence! I shall be forever grateful to them, as I know so many others are. May I take this opportunity to publicly thank them and the other dedicated people who work to bring our Lord's love to the elderly, sick and lonely.

May God shower His choicest blessings on them now and always.

Patricia Allen Hainsworth
Holcomb Road
Victor

Bishops should devote work to constructing 'foundation'

To the Editor:

A man does not install a new roof on a house with a crumbling foundation or a termite-ridden frame, nor does a shoemaker prepare new laces for boots with no soles. For the house or the boots to fulfill their "purpose" — all of these things will be necessary — but without the foundation or the sole, all else is futile.

The Catholic bishops have given us pastoral letters on peace and on the economy; they have addressed the issues of the role of women in the Church, married priests and even our government's role in Central

America. I wait for a strong pro-life statement from them, and a Catholic nun speaks in favor of abortion on national television. The bishops, meanwhile, are busy working on the roof, and the foundation continues to crumble.

A pro-life conviction is fundamental to our faith. To call oneself Catholic and not "choose life" is to speak a lie.

Have we, as a people, become "like the nations"? What will be our Babylon?

Nora L. Brunette
North Street
Caledonia

On the Right Side

Father Paul J. Cuddy



Two Letters

From Father Lewis Brown, Naval Chaplain, Okinawa, Japan:

"Arrangements for this month's battalion Community Action Project, good works done by the military, brought me to St. Joseph's Church. The pastor is a venerable Capuchin with 26 years on the island: Father Valentine Thibodeau. He explained, 'We have no evidence of Francis Xavier's efforts, and the Canadian missionaries who were here in the '30s were expelled by the Japanese. When we arrived in 1946, there were five Catholics. Now there are 5,000. The best way to evangelize the natives is through funerals. Since the native 'religion' is ancestor worship, Catholic respect for the dead is well-received. They love All Souls Day and the whole month of November."

"As part of our Community Action, 23 Marines cleared the field of thick grass and vines where Father Valentine plans to build a columbarium. He said, 'Since cremation is mandatory, a nice building for the remains of their loved ones will be appreciated. The second way to reach the natives is through weddings. This shows their respect for family life, which is so important that to be born out of wedlock is to be deprived of a family tree, and therefore of life itself."

"Our schools are next. But the breakthrough will come with a native clergy, and we have two in the major seminary now. Five miles south, in a suburban area, seven marines planted sod around the new Church of the Risen Christ. The dignity of the risen Christ appeals to them."

Comment: At Christmas time, this column described the charity of soldiers during Christmas time at Biggs Air Force Base in El Paso, Texas, where I was chaplain in 1955. Many ex-military people, and those having relatives and friends in the military, expressed their appreciation. Well-meaning pacifists disregard the responsibility of the gov-

ernment to protect its citizens, and the implication is often made that military life develops a crop of Rambos. The work of the Marines around the chapels (narrated by Father Brown) is typical of work done everywhere there are military bases and zealous chaplains. Let us praise them.

To PBS TV station, Channel 21:

"On Sunday, February 9, I was at St. Vincent's rectory in Corning. About 9:30 p.m., I turned on the TV and happened on the Binghamton PBS station, WSKG. It was showing a documentary entitled "To Be a Priest," showing the steps to the priesthood from early seminary days to ordination to the actual exercise of the priestly office. The film was made under the patronage of the National Council of the Knights of Columbus. The Knights have a membership of 1,200,000.

"When I returned to Rochester, I phoned your station to inquire if the film had been shown by you, thinking that it might be a national PBS presentation. It was not, and I suppose it is programmed ad placitum by your program department. Several Corning people spoke to me of the program and were highly pleased.

"May I respectfully request that Channel 21 also show this documentary? If you do, will you please advise the media ahead of time, so it will be well advertised? Also, please advise Father George Norton, our diocesan communications director; Father Thomas Valenti, vocations director; as well as Father James Schwartz, a kind of godfather to the priests of the diocese. Thus, publicity would be thorough.

"After the sultry "Thorn Birds" and the sleazy "True Confessions" and Phil Donahue shows with priests and nuns expressing peculiar viewpoints, "To Be a Priest" is a relief in its normalcy.

"Anyway, please consider my request for the showing of this documentary."